

St Charles transitions into project management

By Monica Frazier

In March, NIEHS trainee Jordan St Charles, Ph.D., began a new position as a clinical trials project manager at [LabCorp](https://www.labcorp.com/wps/portal/) (<https://www.labcorp.com/wps/portal/>) in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. LabCorp provides comprehensive laboratory services to sponsors who are conducting clinical trials.

While at NIEHS, St Charles studied various aspects of DNA replication fidelity using budding yeast as a model system, as part of the [DNA Replication Fidelity Group](#), which is led by Tom Kunkel, Ph.D. “[Jordan] made seminal contributions to our research on three projects, the first of which has just been provisionally accepted for publication,” he said.

Using NIEHS and NTA resources

St Charles said that the NIEHS Brown Bag Lunch series was instrumental in identifying her new career as one she was interested in. “The Brown Bag Lunch events were the first place that I considered trying to work in clinical trials,” she said.

In addition to attending events like the Brown Bag Lunch series, St Charles participated in a variety of career development opportunities available at NIEHS, including the Trainees Action Committee within her laboratory branch, the NIEHS Trainees Assembly (NTA) Steering Committee, as well as writing stories for the Environmental Factor. “Being a part of the steering committee gave me more communication experiences, which should help with the more client-focused aspects of my new job,” St Charles said.

Kunkel also recognized the contributions St Charles made throughout the institute in preparation for her future career. “Her organizational and people skills contributed greatly to the whole scientific enterprise in the Division of Intramural Research, and they were a valuable component of her training,” he said.

Preparing for a career away from the bench

St Charles took steps to help prepare for a career away from the lab bench, a move many trainees consider but are unsure how to achieve. Once she identified the career path she wanted to take, she researched important qualifications that could make her a better candidate and then followed through.

“I would recommend the Regulatory Affairs Certification study course that the [North Carolina Regulatory Affairs Forum](https://nocraf.memberclicks.net) (<https://nocraf.memberclicks.net>) runs during evenings in the summer as a good way to learn about clinical trials in the U.S.,” St Charles noted. “It is also a great networking opportunity. I met several people who got internships or jobs through people they met there,” she added.

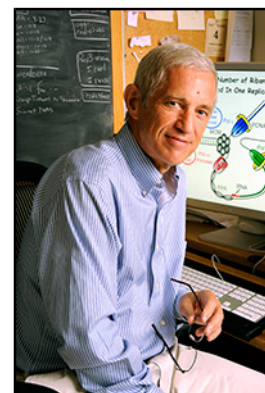
St Charles got additional experience by taking on an internship with Camargo Pharmaceutical Services, an opportunity she found out about through the NIEHS [Office of Fellows Career Development](#), headed by Tammy Collins, Ph.D.

Kunkel emphasized the importance of the translatable skills St Charles strengthened at NIEHS. “By the time she left for her new position, I was very confident that she had the critical thinking skills, work ethic, positive attitude, and persistence needed for success in her new position, regardless of the exact scientific context,” he said.

(Monica Frazier, Ph.D., is an Intramural Research Training Award fellow in the NIEHS Mechanisms of Mutation Group.)



For trainees hoping to move into a similar career, St Charles gave this suggestion, “Diversify your experiences as much as possible, because those experiences can show your adaptability and bridge gaps in your resume.” (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)



“I very much admired the fact that Jordan always took the larger view, by constantly networking as she planned for her future,” Kunkel said. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

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